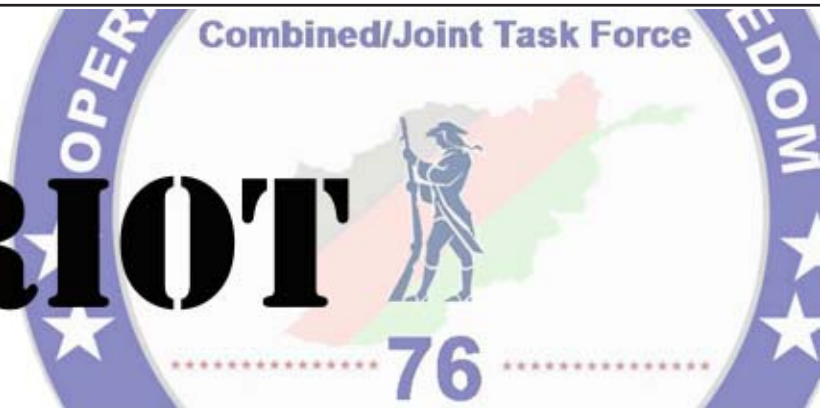




THE PATRIOT



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A CJTF-76 Publication

June 1, 2005

Longhorn leaves legacy of success

Story and photos by
Sgt. Tara Teel
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

HERAT-Eight months and almost five million dollars. 221 projects completed or in-progress. Such is the legacy of Combined Task Force Longhorn.

From the youngest to oldest, from men to women, the CTF Longhorn reached out and touched every walk of life in western Afghanistan.

"We have completed projects that range from building 10 new schools to air dropping humanitarian assistance supplies and almost everything in between," said Maj. Rick Johnson, Regional Command West civil affairs officer.

CTF Longhorn took over for Task Force Saber in Oct. 2004, and has led the way ever since in providing civic assistance and provisions to the Afghan



Maj. Rich Johnson, RC West civil affairs officer, shows an Afghan man a picture of himself that was taken during a prior visit to the village of Chulan Gah, outside of Herat City.

people.

Projects started during TF Saber's era were completed by Longhorn, which includes four new schools in the Shindand district of the Farah province.

"Building schools has the largest and longest impact," said Johnson. "They

can't be destroyed or misused as easily as vehicles. The entire community gets excited. The Afghans are very serious about education."

The regional Provincial Reconstruction Teams based in Herat and Farah along with a Civil Affairs

Team-A from Task Force Peacekeeper encompasses the four western provinces of Heart, Ghor, Farah and Badghis, roughly the size of Oregon.

In the Farah province, the PRT handed out school supplies including curtains, dictionaries and chalk

boards to 36 schools and gave 1,250 pounds of rice and 154 generators among other things to various villages in the area. They also repaired broken police motorcycles and provided an additional 65 to the police forces and government. They also constructed the first TV and radio station for the Farah region.

In the Shindand district of Farah, the CAT-A completed 20 wells and the construction of three primary schools is still under way. The Badghis province was not left untouched. The educational department received 100 school tents and the Qala-E Naw hospital was given sheets, blankets, gowns and other hospital supplies.

Longhorn has done a lot to help the Afghan people. However, the projects are just the end re-

See HERAT Page 4

A shot in the foot doesn't keep one from reenlisting

Story and photo by Pfc.
Jon H. Arguello
TF Bayonet
Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD-A Paratrooper from the 173rd Combat Support Company reenlisted Thursday as he lay in bed with a bullet hole in his left foot.

The combat engineer attached to Task Force Rock was shot in the foot during a patrol with Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry (Airborne).

"We were on a patrol when we heard gun fire," said recently promoted Spc.

Aaron Pace, from Bentonville, Ark. "I dove behind a rock and that's when the bullet hit me."

Even a bullet couldn't deter Pace from reenlisting.

"I already had my mind made up," he said. "I love being a combat engineer."

Pace is exactly the type of Soldier the Army needs to keep, said 173rd CSC First Sgt. Lauro Obeada.

"He's everything a combat engineer needs to be," Obeada said. "He's tough, determined and smart. Nothing makes me

happier than knowing he's decided to stay in our company."

Pace said the bullet didn't affect his decision at all.

"I love the job," explained Pace. "Getting shot at is part of the job but I still love it. It's fun."

Pace was the only casualty on the patrol and was treated quickly he said.

"They were telling me 'you're gonna be okay' and I said, 'I know, it's my foot,'" Pace said. "To be honest it felt like a paint ball hitting my foot. I'm not saying I ever want to get shot again, but it didn't hurt as much as I



Capt. Jonny Karpuk reenlists combat engineer Spc. Aaron Pace in Kandahar. Pace received a bullet wound to his left foot while on patrol with Battle Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

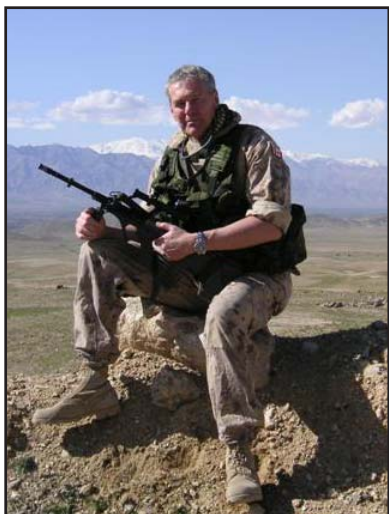
thought it would."

"It really brings it home that we're at war," said Obeada. "It makes it that

much more meaningful that he reenlisted. We need more Soldiers like Pace in the Army."

Coalition Voices / Opinion

Notes from Bagram



By Canadian Lt. Col. Paul Philcox
ISAF Land Liaison Officer to CJTF-76

Bagram, a small village about 50 km north of Kabul, once the headquarters of Alexander the Great, is surrounded by the permanently snowcapped 4,000-meter high mountains of the Hindu Kush. Bagram Airfield is the major U.S. base in Afghanistan. It has more air traffic than all U.S. bases in Europe combined and houses approximately 10,000 Soldiers, Airmen, Marines and Coalition forces.

It has been three months since I left family and friends in Vancouver, Canada, for this mission in Afghanistan. My name is Paul Philcox and I am a Canadian Warrior.

I volunteered for this six-month deployment with the NATO International Security Assistance Force and was assigned here as the Liaison Officer to the U.S. Coalition Forces Headquarters (CJTF-76).

I am the senior of only three Canadians working in this sea of Americans. Yes, these are the Americans with the big U.S. flags on their shoulders, the big American guns, but also the ones with big American hearts. These are the ones some Canadians love to hate. They are here fighting, working and dying to stop terrorists and to help Afghans restore their country.

Of course, it is not all war here. There are three hospitals in Bagram, U.S., Egyptian and Korean and last year they cared for over 50,000 local patients. It was Bagram's air support that assisted in the recovery operations of the KAMAir crash last February. U.S. and ISAF personnel came to the assistance of the hundreds of stranded people and vehicles at the Salang Tunnel last winter and it was U.S. aircraft that dropped humanitarian assistance and rescued Afghans affected by the spring flooding.

There is no doubt in my mind that it is in our best interests to be here. But before we can start the rebuilding, we must ensure the Afghans have security. To achieve that, it involves forcibly engaging the Taliban, al Qaeda and criminal elements and then following up with meaningful reconstruction, rehabilitation and self-sustainment projects. The Afghans are a resilient, industrious and intelligent people who, given the opportunity will make their country viable again.

So here am I, one Canadian, one British Columbian and one Vancouverite; with a small Canadian flag on my shoulder, sharing the load and doing my small part along with the many other Canadians here.

So for all the "doubting Thomases" and "politically correct self-righteous protesters," don't worry yourselves, you can sleep well tonight. Your rights and freedom are secure. Because unheralded, quietly and humbly there are thousands of other Canadian Warriors like me out there and we will stand on guard for thee.

One last word; we are working very hard here to make this fall's Afghan National Elections a success. To all of you, Vancouverites in particular, you have two, possibly three elections coming up, so don't waste what so many have paid for with their blood. You have your Freedom – so do what 90% of world can't do, **VOTE!**

(Editors Note: Lt. Col. Philcox originally wrote this editorial for his hometown newspaper in Vancouver, Canada.)

Chaplain's Corner



By Maj. George Johnson Jr.

CJTF-76 Base Operations Chaplain

Often we have heard or perhaps have said it ourselves, "we must take the lemons that life places before us and make lemonade." Nowhere in our society, from my experiences, can we find more lemonade makers than in the Armed Forces.

Under the most stressful situations you will find among service members a convincing majority of men and women who innately can find true joy and happiness in the most remote places.

Just a couple of years ago, USA Today published a survey in which respondents

(general populace) were asked, "How often do you experience stress in your daily life?"

The answers: Frequently – 42 percent; Sometimes – 38 percent; Rarely – 18 percent; Never – 2 percent.

Not being a math scholar, it looks as though ninety-eight percent of the people that took the survey had to cope with various degrees of stress.

Without a doubt, troops on a daily basis are confronted with various degrees of stress, too. But when soldiering places before us lemons we make lemonade, lemon pie, lemon ice cream and lemon tea.

So the question becomes, "Can our stress, our lemons, result in joy and happiness?" The answer is an emphatic, "YES!"

It is an unwritten creed that good service members internalize

through osmosis or some other unknown way how to make the best of any situation. Making the best of any situation is what focused, faithful and fruitful professional Soldiers do for a living.

When we know that we have been well prepared and are focused on our mission regardless of the stress level, there is a divine joy and happiness that encompasses our every endeavor.

When we are faithful to our God, our Nation, our families and to each other there is a spiritual presence inside of every service member that brings out our best. Because we see the "big picture," that each troop's fruitfulness brings lasting results to a world in search of justice and peace for all, we are willing to "make the best of any situation."

To thine own self be true

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

The U.S. economy is looking stronger every day and that economic growth is creating a significant number of jobs, as witnessed in the third quarter of 2004, and should continue through 2005 (Herman Trend Alert, Sept. 17, 2004).

This trend will stimulate American employees who are dissatisfied with their jobs into looking for new positions. This trend will also cause a larger number of U.S. government employees to reconsider moving on to a more rewarding job.

This trend is not just in the private or government sector but also in various military components. Officers and enlisted personnel may be looking for a new military branch or military occupational specialty or they may be looking toward an end of tour stationing.

Recent studies suggest that up to 40 percent of today's work force have already checked-out by investing more of their attention to new job opportunities, rather than to performance in their current positions. These employees, who have psychologically resigned, but still report for work every day, are known as "warm chair attrition." A substantial number of them are expected to leave their jobs as soon as the economy improves.

We've all heard about a "short-timers" attitude. I can guarantee you that each of them have a perfectly good excuse why their employers, or in our case, the leaders or government "owes them." That helps them justify why

they don't give 100 percent at work any more. What Germans call this syndrome is poor *arbitesmorale* (worker's morale). Americans call it work ethic.

Everybody knows several really good people that have been handed a "raw deal" and so they in turn have lost their focus at work. But who does this harm? Their boss? Their office comrades? Or themselves? I put to you that the one harmed the most is the person who has lost their personal work ethic. Remember what Shakespeare said: "To thine own self be true."

Everyone is the captain of their own destiny. Everyone holding a position or job chose to accept the job. No one tricked them. On the contrary they probably tricked their employers into believing they were the best person for that position.

So from a management or leaders point of view, how do you fix the "warm chair attrition" problem? You can take the easy route and just wait for these dissatisfied employees to leave for greener pastures. Or you can become an employer who cares about putting the right people in the right jobs by appreciating employees as individuals, improving your communication with them, and showing them that you are genuinely interested in their professional development.

I guarantee you that the second choice is the harder one, but it's the choice that allows leaders and management to build a strong team that is true to itself.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

18 holes in Afghanistan Are minefields hazards?

Story by Paul Haven
Associated Press

KABUL (AP) - I am not a golfer, but that didn't stop me from having a memorable day at the Kabul Golf Club. You see, the Kabul Golf Club is not much of a course.

Its fairways only recently have been cleared of land mines, its greens are made of dirt for lack of grass, and two busy roads run through it, filled with horn-toting young Afghans returning from day trips out of the capital.

Despite these shortcomings, nobody can accuse the club of false advertising when it boasts on the score sheet handed out to players that it is without doubt the "best, and only" course of its kind in Afghanistan.

The message seems to be catching on.

Since it opened last year, the club has picked up about 60 regular customers, most of them foreigners, said course manager Muhammad Afzal Abdul.

A round on the nine-hole course costs \$15, with an extra \$5 charge for mandatory caddie service.

That's a lot in a country where most people get by on a few dollars a day. But for many expatriates, it's a small price to pay for a round of golf on one of the most unlikely courses in the world.

Even for a terrible golfer like myself, it was a thrill to tee off in the shadow of the snowcapped Hindu Kush mountains, in a country where most of my job involves reporting

on the aftermath of war.

Teeing off with a group of colleagues, my first shot kicked off to the right, landing in a foot-deep mud hole about 30 yards from the tee.

"No problem," said my caddie, Mohammed Karim, picking the ball up and putting it on a fresh tee. As I would soon learn, club rules allow golfers to tee their ball up after nearly every shot, since nearly every ball finds its way into a rocky crag, a deep muddy hole or an impossibly steep mound of dirt.

Putting isn't much easier. The black sand on the putting greens quickly is spoiled by the footprints of other golfers, and it is exceedingly hard to get a read on how the ball will roll. It's a bit like golfing in a children's sandbox.

I took a quintuple-bogey nine on the 371-yard first hole, and an eight on hole No. 2. After that I lost count, and just had fun.

Even if the course is rough by Western standards, its condition still represents a stunning reversal of fortune.

The club was all but abandoned after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, when most Western embassies evacuated their staff. During the civil war of the 1990s, warlords lobbed mortars and rockets across the fairways, destroying the clubhouse.

When the hard-line Taliban militia came to power in 1998, it declared golf un-Islamic and shuttered the course, or what was left of it.

Club employees suffered even more.

"The Taliban came to my home

one night and took me away," said Abdul, the club pro and Afghanistan's former golf champion. "They brought me to the intelligence service building and beat me every night with cables. They told me golf was a sin and accused me of being at the service of foreigners."

Abdul said that when he got out he found that his infant son had died because his wife was so malnourished she couldn't produce enough breast milk to feed him.

Like millions of his countrymen, Abdul fled to Pakistan, getting a job as a taxi driver in the northwestern frontier city of Peshawar.

When he heard that the club was to reopen, he came back home. He says he sees the future of both the course, and his country, as bright.

"I am very happy now," he said as we walked serenely through the dried-up bed of what was once the club's only water hazard. "We have peace and security in Afghanistan now, and I have been reunited with my golf. It had been way too long since I picked up a club."



SGLI benefits expanded

Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON - Defense and Veterans Affairs officials are ironing out details of programs that will expand benefits provided through Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance.

The \$82 billion supplemental legislation signed into law by President Bush May 11 increases maximum SGLI coverage to \$400,000 and provides payouts of up to \$100,000 for servicemembers with traumatic injuries, explained Stephen Wurtz, the VA's deputy assistant director for insurance.

The increased SGLI coverage will take effect Sept. 1, and the so-called "traumatic SGLI" benefit, December 1. Wurtz said the legislation directs that both benefits will be retroactive to Oct. 7, 2001.

Traumatic SGLI benefits will be retroactive for troops who have lost limbs, eyesight or speech or received other traumatic injuries as a direct results of injuries received during Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom. The benefit does not apply to servicemembers suffering from disease.

The retroactive coverage increase is payable as a result of deaths in either operation, or under other conditions prescribed by the secretary of defense, Wurtz said.

Servicemembers enrolled in the SGLI program will notice an increase in their premiums when the

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THE PATRIOT

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CJTF-76 Commander

Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya

CJTF-76 Public Affairs Officer

Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara

Editor

Sgt. Adrian Schulte

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Take pictures within your units. Look for unique shots that show your unit's mission and E-mail them to: cjtf76.pao.photos@cjtf76.centcom.mil
Include Name, Rank, Unit, Job Description and hometown of photographer. Also, provide in the caption - the date, location, unit mission and identify any troops.

Photo from the Field



A CH-47 Chinook helicopter sling loads another Chinook at Bagram Airfield. (Photo by Capt. John Glenn, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CJTF-76)

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

The President's Memorial Day Proclamation

On Memorial Day, we honor the men and women in uniform who have given their lives in service to our Nation. When the stakes were highest, our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen answered the call of duty and made the ultimate sacrifice for the security of our country and the peace of the world.

Throughout our Nation's history, members of the Armed Forces have taken great risks to keep America strong and free. These proud patriots have defended the innocent, freed the oppressed, and helped spread the promise of liberty to all corners of the earth. In serving our Nation, they have been unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, and unmatched in decency. Because of their selfless courage, millions of people who once lived under tyranny now are free, and America is more secure.

On Memorial Day, we re-

member that this history of great achievement has been accompanied by great sacrifice. To secure our freedom, many heroic service members have given their lives. This year we mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, and we remember the Americans who died on distant shores defending our Nation in that war. On Memorial Day and all year long, we pray for the families of the fallen and show our respect for the contributions these men and women have made to the story of freedom. Our grateful Nation honors their selfless service, and we acknowledge a debt that is beyond our power to repay.

In respect for their devotion to America, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950, as amended (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace



First Sgt. Tracy Ross, first sergeant headquarters and headquarters company, 12th Aviation Brigade (Task Force Griffin) sings a hymn during a Memorial Day service on Bagram Airfield Monday. (Photo by Sgt. Adrian Schulte, CJTF-76 Public Affairs)

and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106 579, has also designated the minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 30, 2005, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11:00 a.m. of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I also ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day. I urge the media to participate in these observances.

I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States, and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty ninth.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Herat PRT leaves mission to Italians

HERAT from Page 1

sult. The projects also offer jobs for the Afghans; provide skills, experience and professions to last a lifetime. They are opportunities for the Afghans to apply new skills and use them to start projects of their own. The projects also stimulate the economy and growth as the materials used are purchased from local vendors.

Longhorn handed responsibility of western Afghanistan over to the International Security Assistance Forces during a Transfer of Authority ceremony May 31.

As the Transfer of Authority drew near,



Afghan elders of Sapeed Bar talk with Combined Task Force Longhorn civil affairs personnel about a broken well outside Herat City May 14.

the civil affairs officers in Herat worked closely with the Italian PRT and ISAF forces, ensuring they were familiar with the area, the processes of getting approval for projects, and introducing them to the Afghan people they will work hand-in-hand with to finish the projects. Italy took over the responsibility of the Herat PRT from the U.S. at the end of March and has already initiated some of its own projects.

For the Soldiers of Longhorn, the mission is over, but the impact of Longhorn's presence will remain. It will remain in the schools, hospitals, wells and therefore, in the lives of the people of western Afghanistan.

New SGLI benefits to take effect

SGLI from Page 3

increases take effect. The traumatic SGLI benefit will be rolled into the basic SGLI program and will likely cost about \$1 a month, Wurtz said.

Troops opting for maximum SGLI coverage — \$400,000 vs. the current \$250,000 - will see their monthly premiums increase from \$16.25 to \$26, Wurtz said. This is based on the rate of 6.5 cents per \$1,000 of insurance coverage.

SGLI coverage is currently available in \$10,000 increments, but as of Sept. 1, the increments will increase to \$50,000.

Because the rates have not

changed, servicemembers who retain \$250,000 or less coverage will see no increase in their premiums, Wurtz said, except for the \$1 "traumatic SGLI" premium.

While these expanded benefits will be provided retroactively, affected servicemembers won't be charged retroactive payments, he said. DoD will absorb that cost.

In a new twist introduced through the supplemental legislation, troops with dependents must get their spouse's approval to purchase less than the full amount of SGLI coverage. In the case of members who are not married, notice will be provided to the designated beneficiary

when the member purchases less than the maximum coverage.

The new traumatic SGLI benefit is designed to provide "a quick infusion of cash" for cash-strapped families of troops recuperating from traumatic injuries received in the line of duty, Wurtz said.

Compensation will range from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and is designed to help families of severely wounded troops leave their homes and jobs to be with their loved one during recovery. "These families incur a lot of expenses, and this is designed to help them financially," Wurtz said.

While VA staff members con-

sult with DoD to write regulations that will put the new SGLI benefits into effect, Wurtz said, "lots and lots of details have to be worked out."

Among outstanding issues is the fact that the expanded SGLI coverage is part of the supplemental legislation package that funds operations only through Sept. 30. That's 30 days after the new SGLI limit takes effect and two months before the traumatic SGLI benefit begins.

Wurtz said VA is confident Congress will resolve this issue before there's any lapse in coverage.

VA will continue to oversee and control the SGLI program.

Across Afghanistan / CJTF - 76

Vehicular accidents threaten lives and missions



A vehicle that was involved in a roll-over accident May 6 near Bagram Airfield.

Story and photo by Sgt. Adrian Schulte

CJTF-76 Public Affairs

Operating a vehicle in Afghanistan can challenge even the most experienced of drivers. On top of staying aware of the dangers that face troops on a daily basis outside the wire, drivers must deal with confusing and poor road conditions and the challenging terrain.

From April to May 25, on the road between Bagram Airfield and Kabul alone, there were 29 traffic accidents. Two of those accidents resulted in the death of Afghans.

Incidents involving the death of a non-combatant erode the trust and confidence that the Coalition has gained from Afghanistan. They

take away the successes the Coalition has attained.

The causes of accidents ranged from speeding to squeezing through tight areas in traffic.

"Most of these accidents are from Soldiers trying to get from one point to another using the 'rules of engagement' where they figure all they have to do is honk their horn and just squeeze in," said Sgt. Lee Lamb, traffic accident investigator for the 13th Military Police Company.

This is especially a concern in highly congested areas where vehicles have to contend with traffic circles, he said.

"Usually the first truck will get through and it's the second or third truck that gets hit," said Lamb.

"I think the problem is when

people drive in [Afghanistan], they think it is a kind of a free-for-all," said Capt. Luke Coffey, Task Force Guardian battle captain. "There are not that many enforced traffic standards here, but you have to use common sense."

Recently, a non-tactical vehicle was involved in an accident on their last mission before heading home.

"They were just going on their last mission and in a hurry to get there and get back," Lamb said describing the trip which ended when an SUV the Soldiers were driving in rolled over.

The effects these accidents have on the greater mission extends beyond the roadways.

"It has a negative effect and it makes it look like the Soldiers don't care about Afghans," Lamb said. "They are always in a hurry to get where they are going. All of the convoys that I ride in, I always have to tell the driver to slow down. You don't know where these jingle trucks are coming from and kids could run out in the middle of the road just trying to say hi to an American or to shake an American's hand and get hurt."

"Every time that there is an incident or case where a local gets hurt or killed by us driving poorly, it reflects negatively on the cause here. It is also one less chance we get to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people," Coffey said.

Driving mishaps are directly linked to the total successes and failures of the Coalition in Afghanistan.

Many of these acci-

dents can be avoided if the vehicle commanders in the passenger seats simply do their job, said Lamb. Also, using communication devices between vehicles will help limit the number of mishaps.

"I think these can be prevented if the team leader or the NCO in the right seat would tell the driver to slow down and actually do what they are supposed to do as a vehicle commander," Lamb said.

Just staying aware of the surroundings is another way to reduce mishaps while driving, Coffey said.

"Those of us who are stationed in Italy know all about the bikes, the mopeds and pushy drivers on the road," Coffey said. "It's the same thing here driving through Kabul but you have to add carts and donkeys and everything else on top of that. Knowledge of where you are and being a defensive driver will help."

Also, while on the bases around Afghanistan, a ground guide is required anytime a vehicle is backing up. Using one will cut down on the fender benders that plague our installations.

Tips to make sure your journeys inside and outside the wire are safe include:

- Use a ground guide when backing up.
- Make sure truck commander is aware of what is going on.
- Gunners in tactical vehicles can be a valuable set of eyes on the road.
- Drive slowly when it calls for it and obey normal traffic rules.
- Use radios to communicate between vehicles
- Use overall common sense.

CJOA Traffic Accident Facts August 2004 – May 2005

- Total number of traffic accidents – 249 (Average of 28 per month)
- Total number of major traffic accidents – 73 (Average of 8 per month)
- Total number of minor traffic accidents – 176 (Average of 20 per month)
- Total number of injuries from traffic accidents – 16
- Total number of fatalities from traffic accidents – 2

A major traffic accident has to have at least one of the following:

- Damage over \$1,000
- Injury or fatality
- Involve a military vehicle

A minor traffic accident has to have all three of the criteria below:

- Damage less than \$1,000
- No injury or fatality
- Involve a non-military vehicle

Regional Command East / Task Force Thunder



Pfc. Josh Burnett, a "Number 3 Man" for Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division loads a round into a 155 mm Medium Towed M198 Howitzer, May 13, at Forward Operating Base Salerno.



Sgt. Damien M. Mattocks, a gunner, adjusts a 155 mm Medium Towed M198 Howitzer for displacement.

King of Battle keeps Salerno rocking

Story and photos by
Spc. Laura E. Griffin
CTF Thunder
Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO—Most people have never felt anything like it in their life. For a split second, you can't breathe. You can't see. You might even fall over... and that isn't even the strongest charge.

The power of the 155 mm M198 Howitzer is awesome in every sense of the word. It is that power that makes Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division "The King of Battle" at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

"The artillery is called 'The King of Battle' because the infantry merely occupies the land, but artillery preps that land before the infantry arrives so they have less resistance when they're there," said Sgt. 1st Class William A. Covey, a platoon sergeant in Battery C. "It's hard for the infantry to function in their job without the artillery. Just like the mortars, we're another asset the maneuver commanders use, and when used wisely, we're very effective."

Putting the Howitzer's power to use starts with a call from the forward observers in the field.

"The forward observ-



A 155 mm Medium Towed M198 Howitzer belonging to Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, sends a round downrange at Forward Operating Base Salerno.

ers call in on the radio; they tell us where they want us to shoot," said Sgt. Lawrence F. Scheck, a field artillery tactical data systems specialist in Battery C. "Basically we put that information into our advanced field artillery tactical data system computer, along with what kind of rounds we're shooting, where we're shooting, who's shooting and who's calling it in, it computes that data and gives us actual firing data to send down to the guns."

They call the forward observers when they fire and the observers give them feedback to adjust fire.

Adjusting fire is done with just one gun, said Scheck. While adjusting that gun, the other guns follow along on the radio so

they know what's going on and where to shoot when the call comes to "fire for effect" — when all the guns shoot at the same time.

Getting those tubes on target and sending rounds downrange takes the carefully orchestrated teamwork of at least seven people.

The "Number 1 Man" loads the round and propellant, primes the weapon and pulls the lanyard. The "Number 2 Man" lifts the loading tray with the round on it, carries the empty tray back and puts the next round on the tray.

The "Number 3 Man" helps load the round and takes the extra powder increments to the rear. The ammunition team chief maintains accountability of the

ammunition, prepares the ammunition for firing and cuts the powder into the required increments.

The assistant gunner adjusts the elevation of the Howitzer tube. The Gunner adjusts the tube left or right. Finally, the section chief verifies the fuse, round, charge being shot, gunner's data and gives the command to fire.

The distance the round travels depends on the size of the charge that is loaded behind the round. The charges range in size from the Charge 8 Super to the Charge 5.

"The Charge 8 Super fires the greatest distance," said Spc. Richard A. Stephens, the ammunition team chief on Battery C's gun number four.

"I like firing," said Spc. James H. Reeves, the "Number 1 Man" on Battery C's gun number four, adding that he particularly likes firing the Charge 8 Super.

"It's probably the most exciting thing I've done here because of the power of the charge and the limits it puts the gun through because it actually makes the breach, the closure that I load the round in, touch the ground and it shows you what the max power of that gun can do," said Reeves.

Spc. Paul M. Crandall, the "Number 2 Man" on gun number four, is also impressed by the Charge 8 Super.

"If you're looking directly at the cannon when it fires the Charge 8 Super, your eyes will have a red out for half a second," said Crandall. "It's from the shockwave from the cannon; you can actually feel it hit your body."

When the mission is over, the guns quiet and the earth stops shaking.

"That's the life of the field artillery. We are ready and waiting for the bad guys to pop up, and then we put them down," said Covey. "We don't always get a real clear battle damage assessment, but we know when the bosses come down here and say, 'Hey, good shooting,' that's all we need."

Regional Command East / Task Force Thunder



Master Sgt. Joseph Issertell, Combined Joint Task Force 76 joint visitors bureau, hands out bags to young Afghan children during a humanitarian mission to an all-girl school and orphanage in Charikar village near Bagram Airfield, May 9.

Headquarters 'adopts' new challenges

Story and photos by
Sgt. Adrian Schulte
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD—One of the easiest and most effective ways U.S. Soldiers can win the trust and confidence of Afghans is through the children. Troops from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combined Joint Task Force-76, got a chance to win the hearts and minds of young Afghans May 9 during a trip to an orphanage and all-girl school.

The troops, most of whom are based out of the Southern European Task Force on Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, visited the side-by-side installations in Charikar, a village near Bagram Airfield. While there they handed out school supplies, toys and clothing to the kids.

The HHC Soldiers adopted the two installations taking donations from various individuals, groups and organizations from their home stations and the States. The school and orphanage were adopted by the previous HHC troops that the troops relieved in March. The last time they visited, however, was November.

"So we decided to head out there and check it out," said 1st Lt. Tim Benedict, executive officer Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combined Joint Task Force-76, who helped orchestrate the event. "(We) went out two weeks ago to find out what they needed, how many kids they have and to see what we could do for them."



Chief Warrant Officer Janet Martin, CJTF-76 property book officer, receives a flower from a young Afghan orphan during a humanitarian trip.

Benedict also linked up with base operations on Bagram to get a bigger picture of what schools and orphanages in the area needed help the most.

"These were two that were in need while we are here," Benedict said. "Possibly we can pick up more down the road."

Along with civic assistance, the headquarter Soldiers also hope to help the school officials patch up some of the damaged areas of the building. Benedict said he also hopes to bring a medical mission out to the school and orphanage allowing the kids to receive some health care.

The Soldiers will visit the school and orphanage an average of twice a month, Benedict said. Sometimes with just the core members of the headquarters platoon, other times with other Soldiers from the headquarters.

Many Soldiers working in the

joint operations center on Bagram, rarely get to venture beyond the wire to see the effects of their work in the headquarters. These trips by the headquarters company allow those Soldiers to interact with locals and take part in a mission.

"The reason I open it up to everyone in HHC is because people who might just be sitting at a desk the whole time and never get to get out and see Afghanistan, see what we are doing to help these people," Benedict said. "I want to give them a chance to come along and feel like they are contributing."

The chance to interact with Afghans, especially young ones, is not lost on the headquarters Soldiers.

"I liked the way the kids were excited to see us and what we were able to do for them, the little we get to do," said Spc. Nadia Avila, a tactical communications specialist who works out of the joint operations

center. "The most rewarding thing is the look on their faces and the things they ask. You realize how much you take advantage of."

When the Soldiers are replaced next year, they hope their effect will have been felt and their works continue.

"Before we leave I hope to pass off support to our relief and have a good transfer of support," said Master Sgt. Joseph Issertell, who works in CJTF-76 joint visitor's bureau who also helped put together the mission. "Continuity is very important. This type of support takes commitment to work."

"I found that the hardest part of helping is staying committed and motivating people for the long haul. Problems with the school and the orphanage stem from years of neglect and miss management. Throwing supplies at the problem is a short term fix. Without addressing the management and supply issues you only make a dependent system."

Benedict hopes to give some of these kids an opportunity they may have not had before.

"Just that whenever they have something new, it's something they didn't have before," Benedict said. "Obviously we want to make their lives better but that is going to take years. But anytime we see their faces lighten up because they got a new toy or anytime there is a positive impression from and American or the foreign community in general, anything that we can do to make a lasting impression in these kids, it's all worth the effort."

Regional Command East / Task Force Thunder

Marines honor fallen brothers



A Marine from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment pays his respects May 13 at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, during a memorial service.

Story and photos by
Cpl. Rich Mattingly
3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MEHTAR LAM-- The squad and platoon-mates of two Marines killed in a bloody clash with insurgents May 8 gathered throughout the following week to reflect on memories of their fallen brothers.

Sitting in a tent where just a week prior they had prepared for their latest mission with Cpl. Richard Schoener and Lance Cpl. Nicholas Kirven, the mood among the squad-mates was somber, the sounds of battle still ringing in their ears.

From the rafters hung the American flag they had all signed, two signatures slightly more noticeable than the rest as afternoon light filtered through the fabric. There was a lingering sense that the tent should have been filled with laughter and talk of what the Marines planned to do when they returned home next month.

However close to the surface their feelings of loss and grief were, the Marines of Kilo Company, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment only spoke of the positive light they say their friends "Nick and Ricky" brought to everything they did.

As they took turns telling stories and sharing memories, they said they will remember the two Marines as friends, heroes and as Sgt. Charles Bennett, Kilo Co. squad leader recalled with emotion, "The two finest young Marines I have ever seen."

"They were happy go-lucky guys," said Cpl. Jason Valencia, rifle team leader with 2nd Platoon, Kilo Co. "They were both the kind of Marines who were serious enough to always do their job or give you the shirt off their back, but never ones

to take any situation too seriously or let you be down."

The other Marines agreed, every man sharing stories of Kirven and Schoener's incredible ability to make the best out of any situation, their irrepressible spirits and their love of their families.

"We were in this place called Paitak," said Lance Cpl. Nick Collier, rifleman and close friend of Kirven, "and it must have been twenty below and we were miserable. Nick came up to me and started taking stupid pictures of us just to relieve the misery. By the time we were done, I'd forgotten just how bad of a time it was. That's the kind of guy he was."

Kirven was well known for being a practical joker, and for his flashy style of dress and concern for his looks. Squad members jokingly called him "Paris" and teased him for the time he spent fixing his hair. But he was also known to his Marines and his superiors alike as a strong leader and a proficient instructor in his specialties as a Marine Corps Water Survival Instructor, normally a staff noncommissioned officer billet, and as an assault climber.

"He was a great teacher," recalled Staff Sgt. James Horvath, Kilo Co., second platoon sergeant. "He taught me how to be a better swimmer at 3/3 in about ten minutes. He had that maturity to handle and instruct all levels of Marines and all levels of abilities."

"We also had him as a team leader," continued Horvath, "usually a noncommissioned officer's billet, but in our line of work you have to put the right man in there to do the job and he was the right man."

"He was one of the original 'Kilo guys,'" said 1st Sgt. Vincent Santiago, Kilo Co. first sergeant, referring to Kirven's two-deployment tenure with the company. "He was always joyful, always had a smile for everyone. I remember sitting down with him for lunch and discussing his future. He told me that he was considering staying with Kilo for another deployment, helping to mentor the younger Marines. When a Marine makes statements like that, you know he really cares about those around him."

Cpl. Schoener, or "Ricky" to his friends, is remembered as an intellectual young man who read voraciously and always had a story to share for any situation.

"You could be more pissed-off than you'd ever been in your entire life," said one of his squad mates,



Lance Corporal Nick Kirven and Cpl. Ricky Schoener, team leaders with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines, Kilo Co., pose in a picture taken during their deployment to Afghanistan. The two Marines lost their lives in combat May 8 in the Laghman Province of Afghanistan. (Photo courtesy of 3/3 Marines)

"and then Ricky would come out of nowhere with some off-the-wall comment or joke or he would bother you about something else, just bugging you until you forgot what you were mad about in the first place."

Schoener came to Kilo Co. in August of 2004, just in time to begin training for deployment to Afghanistan. After spending the first part of his enlistment in Marine Corps Security Forces as a sentry at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, Ga., his company says he made the transition to his new "grunt" unit seamlessly.

"He didn't have problems transitioning his style of leadership to work in Kilo," said Horvath. "Without trying to force a round peg in a square hole, he integrated his prior skills into what we did," he continued, referring to the valuable knowledge of close-quarters battle Schoener possessed.

Other Marines mentioned his prowess as a pitcher in their flight line games of pick-up baseball and his glowing talk of family from his small hometown in Louisiana.

"He adored his sister and his mom," said one Marine. "He was always talking about them and how he couldn't wait to get home to see them."

The hours that changed the lives of everyone surrounding these two young men were a final testament to the strength of their character and spirit.

When Schoener and Kirven led the way toward the lifeless body of an insurgent and were fired on from a nearby cave with automatic weapons, wounding both, their squad said they never wavered. As their fellow Marines opened fire on the cave, both men continued fighting the fortified enemy until the blast from two enemy grenades took their lives.

The rest of the platoon continued the assault, clearing the cave of enemy fighters and trying to resuscitate the fallen Marines.

With helicopters unable to reach their position, the Marines and Corpsmen of 2nd platoon were forced to make an arduous journey through the mountains back to their patrol base, humping for miles while low on ammunition, out of water and under continuing fire from the enemy. They carried Schoener and Kirven the entire way.

"They would not let go of their brothers," said Sgt. Rob Campbell, 2nd squad leader talking about his

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Regional Command East / Task Force Thunder



Rocket Run

Runners had one last blast before many of them head home, running the 5k or 10k route along the perimeter of FOB Salerno.

Runners who completed the race were given a T-shirt with the dates of rocket attacks from the last year listed on the back.

"This last event of TF Thunder needs to continue on. Soldiers at a forward operating base need events like this to provide a way to forget about the war for just a little while, to just have fun," said Col. Gary Cheek, commander Task Force Thunder. (Photo by Capt. Dwayne Wirfel, TF Thunder Public Affairs)

1/508 helps build new FOB in Paktika

**Story and photo by
Sgt. Douglas DeMaio**
20th Public Affairs
Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE BERMEL— A new Forward Operating Base being built in the Paktika Province is giving the Coalition and the government of Afghanistan a footprint in the Bermel district and bringing the battle to the front door of insurgents.

Since April 27, platoons from A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, have been building FOB Bermel and progress is rapidly being made.

"It seems like we are doing something worthwhile here," said Sgt. William Underhill, 3rd Platoon.

The FOB is bringing security to the remote district of Bermel. Afghan National Army and Police,

along with the 1/508th, are using the base as a staging ground for operations throughout the remote district to bring security and stability to the previously ungovernable region.

"We're looking to fight a successful counter insurgency by going on the offensive and establishing a secure presence in the area so the government of Afghanistan can begin to function in the district," said company commander Capt. Joseph Geraci.

Geraci said the government of Afghanistan had previously tried to govern the region, but the police in Bermel had been murdered by insurgents along the boarder region of Pakistan.

"What we've done here is put a big shock on to the enemy's position here," Geraci said of setting up the FOB.

The FOB's perimeter



Pfc. Todd Arney, A Company, 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, assists local nationals building barriers around Forward Operating Base Bermel, which the unit is constructing.

is already complete and permanent structures are already being built to house the security forces patrolling the area.

Primarily the Afghan Army and police will patrol the district, allowing the Red Devils of the 1/508th to provide training and logistical support for the host nation forces.

"Mostly we are still in the process of teaching them

how to patrol this area on their own," said Pfc. Todd Arney, one of Underhill's Soldiers.

Even though host nation forces will be patrolling the district, the Red Devils will be in the area, so the animosity surrounding foreigners not normally welcomed to the tribal area will need some work, Arney said. When the 1/508th arrived to the area, villagers were reserved at first, but many of

the villagers have warmed up to the security and service the infantrymen are providing to the community.

"The people know why we are here," Arney said. "For the people that don't want us here, we haven't yet had a chance to change their mind. If we do get to stay here permanently, people are going to change their minds. A lot of people already have."

Marines gone but not forgotten

MARINES from Page 7

squad. "We could only walk maybe a few hundred feet or so before we had to switch guys up, but we would never leave them behind. They'd have done the same for us."

"These Marines are a family. Those two were the kind of men whose Marines refused to put them down even though they looked like they couldn't possibly take another step," said Horvath, finishing, "That says a lot about a man."

The operation during which Schoener and Kirner gave their lives effectively broke the back of a sig-

nificant insurgent cell operating in northern Laghman province. That cell had long targeted Coalition and Afghan government forces in the region. Afghan authorities confirmed 15 insurgents killed and an additional six wounded and captured. Three of those killed were cell leaders and it is suspected that more died in the action.

A few nights later, a Marine aimed a projector at the side of a tent and showed pictures and movies of Nick and Ricky to a group



Marines and Sailors from Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment salute during a memorial service May 13 at Forward

huddled around the glowing, make-shift screen.

For another night with Kilo Company, the memory of two Ma-

rines who were always "larger than life" made Marines laugh and smile, and the memory and celebration of their lives sustained their Marines again. It's reflected indelibly across every face that no Marine or Sailor who served their country alongside them will ever be the same.

Lance Cpl. Nick Kirven of Fairfax, Va. was 21 years old. He is survived by his mother Beth, sister Mary-Pride, brothers Joe Purcell and Joseph Belle, father Leo Kirven and stepfather Mike Belle.

Corporal Ricky Schoener of Hayes, La., was 22 and is survived by an extended family including his mother, Bonnie Breaux.

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet

KAF clinic treats Afghan girl

Story by Sgt. 1st Class
Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – A three-year-old Afghan girl was treated for 2nd degree burns to her left arm from the wrist to the elbow after being evacuated to Kandahar Airfield's U.S. medical facility Monday.

The girl's condition was brought to the attention of Coalition forces after her mother brought her to a forward operating base north of Shinkay hoping for medical assistance. Medical personnel there, fearing the girl's arm was in danger of amputation, transported her to Kandahar for more intensive treatment.

While Afghan medical facilities have improved since the fall of the Taliban, burn treatment is still a critical area U.S. forces are able to assist with.

"She's doing fine," said Dr. (Maj.) Michael Woll, General Surgeon at the

Kandahar medical treatment facility there who, along with Dr. (Lt. Col.) Ronald Place, treated the girl. "In fact, right now, she's playing catch with a kid in the next bed that has a broken leg."

Although the medics at the FOB originally thought her arm was in danger, The Kandahar medical team were happy to discover the burns were not as bad as originally thought.

"She had minor, 2nd degree burns that most likely won't require a skin graft of any sort. We're going to hold her here for a week or so to observe her recovery and make sure she's okay, but after that she will probably be sent home," Woll said.

The girl's injury occurred when scalding milk spilled on her, Woll explained. He and Place took her into the operating room to remove the dead tissue from the burned area then applied an antibiotic to fa-



A three-year-old Afghan girl rests after being treated by doctors at Kandahar's U.S. medical facility. The girl's mother brought her to a Coalition fire base after scalding milk spilled on her arm. Doctors expect her to be released within a week. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Stephen M. Lum, TF Bayonet Public Affairs)

cilitate the healing process.

"We probably treat four to five Afghan children a week," he said. "Although burns are a common injury we also see too many kids

that are hurt by land mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices. They're kids, and like any other kids they sometimes play with or around

things that they shouldn't."

Through the help of Coalition forces those mistakes don't always have such long lasting, devastating consequences.



Road construction drives on

Coalition engineers are in the process of constructing a road to connect Kandahar and Tarin Kowt. (Photo courtesy of TF Sword)

Story by Sgt. 1st Class
Todd Oliver
CJTF-76 Public Affairs

BAGRAM AIRFIELD – Creating the first road to directly connect the remote city of Tarin Kowt with the southern city of Kandahar is a monumental task no matter how you look at it.

No one knows that better though than the Soldiers of Task Force Sword, the Engineers of the Combined Joint Task Force-76.

"Everything has to be trucked or flown in," said Sgt. Maj. Scott Walden, Task Sword's Operations Sergeant Major. "The areas through which this road is being constructed

are so remote that many of the items our soldier's need have to be flown in."

The Soldiers are responsible for the road's 'bottom half' in laymen's terms. They make sure the area where the asphalt will eventually be laid is level, that water on it drains and that there are culverts to handle run off rain water or melted snow.

"The number of Soldiers we have working on the project changes as we speak," he said. "Right now it's probably about half a battalion of engineers. They're mostly horizontal construction experts and they ensure the road is level, they install the road's subbase and they ensure it has

proper drainage and that there are culverts along side of it."

Walden went on to explain the United States Agency for International Development will add an asphalt-like substance after his unit completes their work.

In addition to the normal duties of road construction the units 'in the middle of nowhere,' forcing them to also provide all their own life-support.

"Because of their remote location they have to do all the things most other units take for granted. They have to provide their own security, maintain their own equipment and even feed themselves. When something breaks we have

to truck it up from Kandahar or fly it in."

Originally projected to be complete around February 2006, the decision was made to finish the project before the September elections.

"I just saw a briefing yesterday that said we're at 52% complete. Pretty soon we'll have almost an entire battalion working on it. It's going to be a great thing for Afghanistan. It will be the only lifeline between the Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces. It's going to be a nice road, more than 9 meters wide with two lanes and it will easily cut the driving time in half between Uruzgan and Kandahar."

Regional Command South / Task Force Bayonet

Former Taliban embraces new era



Rais Bahgrani, a former prominent Taliban leader, has renounced his ties to insurgents and has decided to run for political office in Helmand province.

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Jacob Caldwell
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR CITY — A prominent Taliban leader has renounced his ties to the insurgents and has decided to run for political office in Helmand province.

Rais Bahgrani, a long-time member of the Taliban, decided after a series of meetings with local and national officials, that he can better help the people of Helmand province by supporting the government of Afghanistan and participating in parliamentary elections this fall.

“Ever since the presidential election, I have spoken with and tried to help the government of Afghanistan,” said Bahgrani.

“Since I heard that there were Americans and Coalition forces coming to Afghanistan, people that had peaceful intentions for Afghanistan, I have had a dialogue with other Taliban leaders and have tried to get them to leave the government to those people who want peace for Afghanistan,” said Bahgrani.

After President Karzai came to office, Bahgrani went to his home in Helmand province and took a rest for six months. During those six months he had meetings with Pashtun leaders, the governor of Helmand province and Coalition members. He supported the presidential elections by working with dis-

trict and tribal leaders, encouraging people to participate in the election process. But Bahgrani had not yet made his public declaration of reconciliation to the new government of Afghanistan.

Coalition members attempted to persuade Bahgrani to turn himself in, but he was hesitant to do so until the government’s reconciliation program put out clear guidance on how the process would work. But now that his declaration has been made public, Bahgrani has big plans for himself and for the people of Helmand province.

Bahgrani has seen the progress made in Afghanistan by the new government and has decided to participate directly in the upcoming regional elections by running for the parliamentary seat in Helmand province. He has a list of issues that, if resolved, will help the people in the province.

“There is a dam that needs to be completed. Water needs to be re-routed to different areas of the province,” said Bahgrani. “Roads are also a problem. We need more good roads in the province. We need schools. There is no education system here.”

“We also need clinics in the mountainous areas. It is very difficult for the people to come to the city for treatment.”

Building new bridges and helping farmers in the province are also on Bahgrani’s agenda.

Ground crew reaches milestone *1,000 missions and counting*

Story by
Sgt. 1st Class Stephen M. Lum
TF Bayonet Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, — Before completing their four-month tour, a 22-person team of active duty and reserve Airmen are reaching a mission milestone of providing ground service for 1,000 airlift missions.

On May 12, the 451st Air Expeditionary Group’s Air Transportation Operation Center did what they’ve done everyday since late January, moving personnel, cargo, vehicles and other assets into the landlocked dusty desert of Kandahar.

Forming the core of the ATOC team are the 14 Air Reservists from the 42nd Aerial Port Squadron, Westover Air Force Base, Mass. They teamed with eight active duty Airmen from Barksdale AFB, La., Nellis AFB, Nev., and Grand Forks, N.D.

“ATOC is small self contained,

24-7 airport terminal operation,” said Capt. Michael E. Collins, Logistic Readiness Flight commander. “The ground service operation encompasses meeting all arriving and departing aircraft, loading and unloading cargo, and transporting passengers and aircrew personnel to and from the terminal.”

“Due to the sensitive location, the operation must be completed within specific ground times to move aircraft in, out and around Afghanistan,” Collins said. “The hours are long and the work is dusty; from the cold of last winter to 100 degree sun, this crew has done it in all conditions.”

The passenger terminal, the small bright yellow wooden hut, is the first stop for all arriving; and the last sight all departing passengers see here. Working inside the cool confines, at the check in desk, is Staff Sgt. Melita Rosebloom, from Grand Forks, N.D., who said she and her husband weren’t excited about deploying and leaving their newborn at home.

She said that it has all been put in perspective for her, and being here has helped her to realize how good we have it at home and the freedoms we take for granted. She and her husband will be returning home shortly, after missing their baby’s first birthday a few weeks ago.

The ATOC operations affect all who serve here in Afghanistan, including military from all services, Coalition countries, dignitaries, civilians and media personnel. Their services affect even Afghan locals, since cargo, vehicles, food and mail also pass through the gates of ATOC.

“I’ve gained respect for why we’re here and what we’re doing,” said Master Sgt. Louis Curto, the team superintendent. “When we talk to the Afghan DHL delivery service workers, they said life is definitely better since we’ve come.”

“Our biggest operation was when the ‘Sky Soldiers’ of the Vincenza, Italy-based 173rd Airborne Brigade swapped out assign-

ments with the Hawaii’s 25th Infantry Division (Light) Soldiers,” adds Curto, an AFLAC insurance representative from Woburn, Mass. “In four weeks, we moved out more than three dozen helicopters, 1,600 tons of cargo and 6,400 passengers.

“By the end of tour we’ll have processed 40,000 passengers, 12,000 tons of cargo and 1,100 missions,” said Curto, who just turned 54.

In a few weeks all will return home, some to their active duty home station and the rest to their civilian lives, including the youngest member 22-year-old Senior Airman Nick Park, a college student also from Wilbraham. He’ll be bringing home a four-month accumulation of “stuff,” but mostly it will be the experiences of this deployment he’ll carry with him—intangible things wouldn’t have received in just four years of college.

What's Happening / News You Can Use

Graduation broadcasts available for deployed parents



Question: What do Department of Defense Dependents Schools—Europe (DoDDS-E) high school principals do when there are military and civilian parents who cannot attend graduation because they are deployed in the service of our nation?

Answer: Principals beam graduation to the deployed parent, on land, at sea, and around the globe wherever America has asked them to serve, using the magic of technology and some major help from the US Army, Europe.

Due to continuing deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, many service members and civilians will miss high school graduation ceremonies for their children this coming year. For the third straight year, a number of the DoDDS-E graduating seniors will receive their diplomas while a parent or other family member is deployed.

Of the 1853 DoDDS-E graduating seniors, approximately 75 have a parent who will be unable to attend due to deployment

The remote broadcast graduation initiative allows principals to connect deployed personnel with graduating seniors for this once in a lifetime event

This year’s broadcasts will be accomplished using web-based technologies and video streaming. A number of USAREUR agencies and units are assisting with the project. Other agencies and commands will provide support and assistance. Twelve of the affected schools are in Germany and the others are in Spain, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

Following the broadcast, deployed parents and their seniors will have the opportunity to talk directly on a two-way video teleconference, using MRW or other assets available to service members down range.

Interviews with local principals and affected seniors can be arranged through the principal and the local military public affairs offices in each community.

Those with questions can call Staff Sgt. David Parra at 231-3017

A listing of ceremonies, dates, and times for graduation broadcasts

Date	High School	Start/End Times
June 9	Hanau	1900-2000 CET
June 9	Heidelberg	1830-2000 CET
June 9	Wuerzburg	1900-2100 CET
June 9	SHAPE	1930-2100 CET
June 10	Alconbury	1900-2000 WET
June 10	Ansbach	1900-2005 CET
June 10	Bamberg	1800-1915 CET
June 10	Baumholder	1900-2015 CET
June 10	Incirlik 1	1800-1930 EET
June 10	Kaiserslautern	1800-2030 CET
June 10	Lakenheath	1900-2130 WET
June 10	Ramstein	1900-2100 CET
June 10	Rota	1900-2000 CET
June 10	Naples	1700-1900 CET
June 11	Aviano	1300-1500 CET
June 11	Vilseck	1600-1730 CET
June 12	Mannheim	1500-1630 CET
June 12	Patch	1500-1700 CET
June 12	Wiesbaden	1600-1800 CET
June 13	Vicenza	2000-2115 CET

Submit your unit’s story to The Patriot

Tell the whole CJOA what your unit is doing.
The Patriot is always on the lookout for amateur journalists and photographers who have a story to tell.
Send your stories to schultea@cjtf76.centcom.mil.
Stand alone photos are also welcome.
Remember when submitting stories and photos to remember the 5 W’s of journalism: who, what, where, when and why.
Also include full names, rank and units of troops involved and of the author.
Stories will be edited for content and to meet journalistic standards.

Have an effect on COLA

Soldiers! The Living Pattern Survey is currently being conducted in Vicenza. The survey is open to all military members with dependents, or their spouses. If that’s you, your participation is desired and crucial. If you want to have a positive impact on your COLA rate, take the survey at <https://www.perdiem.osd.mil/oscola/lps/germany/> between now and June 17th.

Log in with any 6-digit number, and be sure to enter IT073 as the locality code for Vicenza.



Free Stuff! The Patriot will feature a web site per issue which offers free stuff for service members.

Free computers for spouses or parents of deployed service members E-1 through E-5.

<http://www.operationhomelink.org/>

Insurance for severely injured service members

The United States Senate passed legislation creating Traumatic Injury Insurance that will issue active duty service members a payment ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000, should they incur a life altering injury while serving their nation.

This legislation, known as the Wounded Warrior Bill, was introduced as an amendment to the Emergency Supplemental Funding Bill. The Traumatic Injury Insurance will make an immediate payment to the service member within days of sustaining an injury to support him/her and family during hospitalization.

The legislation passed will make the measure retroactive to the start of Operation Enduring Freedom, which began in Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. The House of Representatives must still approve this legislation.

Federal employees who serve wont lose pay when activated

The Senate has agreed to make sure that federal employees serving in the National Guard and Reserve don’t lose pay when they are activated. The measure was added to an \$80.6 billion emergency spending bill to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other costs.

The amendment was approved in a voice vote after a Republican attempt to derail it failed, 61-39. Its prospects of becoming law are uncertain, however. The Senate bill will have to be reconciled with a \$81.4 billion version of the bill the House approved last month.

About 120,000 U.S. government employees serve in the Guard or Reserve and, when activated, they lose an average of \$368 a month, the difference between their civilian and military pay. He said pay issues are a main reason members of the Guard and Reserve don’t re-enlist.

IG Dispatch / Inspector General

Combat Stress Referrals vs Mental Health Evaluations

What's the Difference?

We have received several calls from leaders throughout the theater wanting to know the difference between a mental health evaluation and a combat stress referral.

A Combat Stress Referral (CSR) is an informal "screening" to see if service members are staying focused on the mission. It enables commanders in a combat environment to identify and deal with potential problems *before* they occur. The intent of a CSR is to provide "treatment" by helping Service Members cope with daily combat stressors (in the right manner and under medical supervisor), continue the mission, and function well. A CSR can be voluntary or command-referred (e.g. by Commander or 1SG). When referred by the command, the person making the referral should communicate to the service member that the intent is to get him/her treatment, not to get an evaluation to determine fitness for service.

A Mental Health

Evaluation (MHE) is governed by DoD Directive 6490.1 and DoD Instruction 6490.4. Unlike a combat stress referral, an MHE is a clinical assessment to determine a service member's mental health status and/or fitness and suitability for continued service. An MHE must be conducted by a mental healthcare provider (e.g. a psychiatrist, a doctoral-level clinical psychologist, or a doctoral-level clinical social worker) with necessary and appropriate professional credentials.

Do Combat Stress Referrals require a formal notification process as per DoD Directive 6490.1 and DoD Instruction 6490.4? The answer is "no," provided the intent is to help the service member decompress and, subsequently, continue the mission. However, when the commander makes a clear and reasoned judgment that the service member warrants an evaluation to determine suitability for continued service, *he/she must comply with the provisions of DoD Instruction*

6490.4.

For additional guidance and/or a copy of our "Mental Health Evaluation Cheat Sheet", please contact MSG Antonaccio at DSN 231-4028.

LEADER TOOLS

The CJTF-76 Office of the Inspector General (OIG) offers a variety of tools to help you, the leader, maximize effectiveness. For starters, please visit our website at: www.cjtf76.centcom.smil.mil

For a NIPRNET version of this site, OIG offers the IG Automated Toolbox (IGAT). The IGAT is a compact electronic reference tool, containing references to many Army regulations, tactics, techniques and procedures. If you would like a copy of this CD, contact Master Sgt Antonaccio at DSN 231-4028 or email at thomasa@cjtf76.centcom.mil.

Finally, The Freedom Watch publishes a monthly *IG Corner*—an article devoted solely to frequently asked questions (FAQ).



IG MISSION

Advise the Commanding General, CJTF-76, on the state of the economy, efficiency, discipline, morale, and readiness of assigned and attached units and activities in theater.

Bagram IG Office

Lt. Col. Brian Williams
Master Sgt. Tom Antonaccio
Spc. Talaya Williams
318-231-4028

Kandahar IG Office

Lt. Col. Jayne Jansen
Sgt. 1st Class Earl Collins
318-841-1702/1703



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Complaint Categories (April 2005)

Personnel Management

Casualty Management, Enlisted Promotions, NCOER Due Process, Leaves & Passes

Command Management

Command Climate, Mental Health Referrals, Counseling, Reprisals, Cdr's Discretion, Relief for Cause

Personal Conduct

Maltreatment of Service Members, G.O. #1 Violations, Religious Discrimination.

